

Campaigns

1/ CONSUMER/SPORT

Betfair plays on old cricket rivalries

Campaign Betfair Challenge Series
Client Betfair
PR team Synergy
Timescale July-August 2009
Budget £100,000

Online gambling community Betfair wanted to bring to life its sponsorship of the England and Wales Cricket Board during the summer's biggest sporting event, the Ashes. The company wanted Synergy to come up with a creative and innovative campaign that focused on its core values of fans betting against each other, and drew attention to the fun rivalry between England and Australia.

Objectives

- ◆ To raise awareness and relevance of Betfair to cricket and sport fans
- ◆ To gain coverage in Betfair's target media
- ◆ To drive traffic to FanvFan.com
- ◆ To use PR to generate new customers.

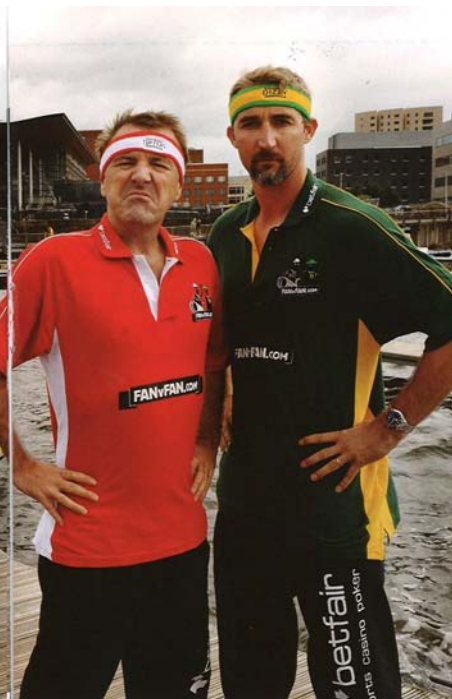
Strategy and plan

To bring to life the fun rivalry between England and Australia, one of the world's oldest sporting feuds, Synergy devised five Betfair Challenges where two rivals would go head to head against each other throughout the summer. The idea was to build a connection between the Ashes rivalry and fans betting against each other.

Ashes legends Phil Tufnell and Australian fast bowler Jason 'Dizzy' Gillespie were signed up to take part in the challenges. Each challenge was held a few days before each Test Match and included pedalo racing in Cardiff Bay, an extreme Lawn Mower Grand Prix at Lord's, the Betfair Stakes



Cricketing enemies Former England cricketer



Phil Tufnell and ex-Australian fast bowler Jason Gillespie performed challenges

The recruitment of Tufnell and Gillespie was well aligned to the brand's values

James Clifford Co-founder, Clifford French

horse race at Warwick Racecourse and giant zorbing in Leeds. Each challenge was filmed and hosted on a dedicated website as well as YouTube, Metacafe and DailyMotion. On the site punters were asked to show support for either Tuffers or Dizzy ahead of each challenge. The most popular was given a head start or time advantage.

The series culminated in a six-a-side cricket match held before the final test match at The Oval. The winner was to be crowned Betfair Challenge Champion 2009, and the loser would have to parade in body paint of the opposing nation's flag.

To promote the events, national and regional broadcasters, local press and online media were invited to the challenges, alongside sports bloggers. Videos were made available to national online outlets as a complete ready-to-upload package and Twitter accounts were set up for Tuffers and Dizzy so they could Tweet about their experiences.

Measurement and evaluation

Coverage appeared across national press, television, radio and regional press. Highlights included Sky Sports News, ITV Wales, BBC Look North, The Guardian, The Sun, The Independent, Metro, Nuts Online, Mail Online, Western Mail and Yorkshire Post.

Sky Sports News covered the launch party, four out of the five challenges, and an extended piece on the forfeit with a summary of the whole series. The Twitter feeds for Tuffers and Dizzy attracted more than 15,000 followers.

Results

More than 2,000 new Betfair accounts were set up as a result of the campaign.

The dedicated FanvFan.com website received more than 7,500 pledges of support for the competitors and attracted more than 45,000 unique users.

Cathy Wallace

SECOND OPINION



James Clifford
Co-founder, Clifford French

The Ashes was the sporting event of the summer. While cricket's oldest rivalry captures the hearts and minds of the public and media, to the industry it represents a highly lucrative vehicle for raising brand awareness.

Brands generally favour one of two broad strategies when considering the major sporting occasions – spend big on sponsorship rights or invest the funds in an expansive creative campaign incorporating talent. Either can be successful, but the best campaigns incorporate aspects of both.

As the official betting partner of the ECB and the Test match grounds, Betfair secured itself the properties to facilitate a fully

integrated campaign – coupling stadium advertising with 'PRable' rights, including player access and tickets for media promotions.

The recruitment of Tufnell and Gillespie was well aligned to the brand's values and the challenges offered entertaining content through a consumer-friendly digital platform. Recognising that media interest in Tuffers and Dizzy was likely to wane over the course of the challenges, Betfair was clever in using England player PAs at the right times to ensure momentum was sustained.

The 'Fan v Fan' message did not quite come through strongly enough for me but, while the campaign was no doubt assisted by a sizeable budget and comprehensive sponsorship properties, this was an example of a well executed and integrated piece of activity.

PRWeek AGENCY SHOWCASE

To see more inspiring PR campaigns visit www.prweekshowcase.com

